



Comment 2 26 March 2005
Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn.: Notice No. 34
P.O. Box 14412
Washington, DC 20044-4412

I am writing in support of the application to create the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA. I have grown pinot noir and chardonnay wine grapes in the proposed area since 1980. My vineyard sits on a ridge at 1500 feet elevation overlooking the Pacific Ocean only three miles distant. The San Andreas Fault lies between the ocean and the vineyard.

The combination of the marine influenced climate and the particular geology and topography produces grapes with unusually high levels of acidic complexity. The wines produced from our fruit are widely recognized for their signature characteristics of phenolic expression and full bodied concentration. The best quality of pinot noir can be grown only on select sites which are extremely rare. The wines made from fruit grown in this district have received the highest critical acclaim and reception. Vineyard land within the proposed Fort Ross-Seaview area has become very desirable in recognition of its ability to produce unique world class grapes and wines.

I receive numerous requests from consumers to visit the vineyards and winery. The area is quite remote from the nearest centers of population; yet interested persons are willing to spend the time and effort to visit my site. Clearly it will be beneficial to consumers to identify wines made from grapes grown in this area. The existing Sonoma Coast AVA includes far too many diverse viticultural areas to define specific wines accurately to the growing numbers of discerning consumers.

Additionally, the proposed Fort Ross-Seaview area has a rich history going back two centuries to the Russian settlements at Fort Ross. Grapes have been a part of this long heritage. What is happening now is a strong revival of the grape growing and winemaking that has been part of the past.

In conclusion, the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA has produced wine grapes and wine for many years. The contemporary demand for fine wines has identified this area as one of the premium sources for the best varietals. It will be a great service to the consumers to identify on the label wines produced from fruit grown in this

area.

Sincerely,


David Hirsch, Manager
Hirsch Vineyards